

Weekly News

CLASSROOM READY • WEEK 2 2010 • LEVEL 2

Tamil Migrants Seek New Life in Canada

On August 13, 492 men, women, and children from the island-nation of Sri Lanka arrived on the shores of Vancouver Island. They had just endured a three-month journey, crowded onboard the ship MV Sun Sea.

This has happened before. In October 2009, a freighter carrying 76 men arrived. And now Canadian immigration officials believe that there may be another boatload of Sri Lankan **migrants** on the way.

The arrivals belong to an ethnic group called the Tamils. The Tamils are a minority group that live mostly in the northern region of Sri Lanka. Many of the Tamil migrants have come here seeking refugee status. They say they have been mistreated and discriminated against by the Sri Lankan government. Canada, they hope, is a

place for them to start over.

The Tamils did suffer during a civil war in Sri Lanka. A group called the Tamil Tigers fought the Sri Lankan government for 23 years in an effort to separate and create an independent Tamil nation. The war ended in May 2009, but by then many people on both sides had been killed, and as many as 300,000 Tamils had lost their homes. Some Tamils say that they have faced murder, kidnapping, and detention since the civil war ended.

According to Canadian immigration rules, the adult would-be-refugees have been detained—kept in secure facilities while immigration officials interview them and check their stories. Before they are released, officials have to make sure the people are who they say they are and that they aren't criminals or members of a terrorist group.

If they are released, they can apply for refugee

status. This is a longer process where immigration officials decide on a case-by-case basis whether each migrant really is a refugee: that is, someone who has been the victim of persecution, and who would be in danger of more if they are returned home.

If the Tamils are found to be refugees, they can apply to become permanent residents of Canada. If not, they will be returned home to Sri Lanka.

Did You Know?

Canadian officials believe that the Tamils are arriving as a result of an illegal human smuggling network. They are thinking about creating a law that would allow them to prevent these ships from landing in Canada. However this could prevent migrants from making full refugee claims, which is a right covered by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. ★

Migrant: Someone who moves from one country or region to another.

Weekly News Q & A

Tamil Migrants Seek New Life in Canada

1. Who are the Tamils and where are these Tamil refugees from?

2. Describe what circumstances have made the Tamils refugees.

3. Why do the refugees have to be detained?

4. What is the process of applying for refugee status?

5. What happens if the Tamils are found not to be refugees?

Critical Thinking

1. Normally this would be a journey of a few weeks at the most. Why do you think the trip took three months?

2. Human smuggling is wrong, but it would go against our Charter of Rights to deny refugees to make a claim to become Canadians. How do you think the government should deal with this dilemma? Should boats ever be turned away?

Political Cartoon



1. What is the cartoon stating?

Word Power

Using the words below, fill in the blanks in the following sentences. All of the words have been used in the article.

1. He has a _____ safe hidden behind the wall in his office.
2. The group _____ long nights and little sleep to finish the project.
3. Jonathan went on a _____ to China last year.
4. What is the _____ of your university application?
5. They were arrested because they were _____ illegal goods into the country.

detention, discriminate, endured, ethnic, facilities, immigration, journey, network, persecution, region, secure, separate, smuggling, status

Quiz

Tamil Migrants Seek New Life in Canada

1. The Tamils endured a two-month journey crowded onboard the ship MV Sun Sea.
True False
2. The Tamils are a majority group that live mostly in the northern region of Sri Lanka.
True False
3. Many of the Tamil _____ have come here seeking _____ status.
4. A group called the _____ fought the Sri Lankan government for 23 years in an effort to separate and create an independent _____ nation.
5. Canadian officials believe that the Tamils are arriving as a result of an illegal _____ network.

Weekly News Answer Key

Tamil Migrants Seek New Life in Canada

1. Who are the Tamils and where are these Tamil refugees from?

This is a group of 492 men, women, and children from the island-nation of Sri Lanka. The Tamils are a minority group mostly from the northern region of Sri Lanka.

2. Describe what circumstances have made the Tamils refugees.

Tamils were on the losing side of a civil war in Sri Lanka. They initiated the war to gain independence from the south. Many died and many lost their homes in the war. Since the war ended, they say that they have faced murder, kidnapping, and detention.

3. Why do the refugees have to be detained?

They have to be kept in secure facilities while immigration officials interview them and check their stories. Before they are released, officials have to make sure the people are who they say they are and that they aren't criminals or members of a terrorist group.

4. What is the process of applying for refugee status?

Once they are released from detention, they can apply for refugee status. Immigration officials decide on a case-by-case basis whether each migrant really is a refugee: that is, someone who has been the victim of persecution, and who would be in danger of more if they are returned home.

5. What happens if the Tamils are found not to be refugees?

They are returned home.

Political Cartoon

1. What is the cartoon stating?

The arrival of the 490 plus Tamils has left legitimate immigrants waiting to make their claim, as immigration officers first have to deal with each individual Tamil case.

Word Power

1. secure
2. endured
3. journey
4. status
5. smuggling

Quiz

1. The Tamils endured a two-month journey crowded onboard the ship MV Sun Sea.

False. Three-month journey.

2. The Tamils are a majority group that live mostly in the northern region of Sri Lanka.

False. Minority group.

3. Many of the Tamil **migrants** have come here seeking **refugee** status.

4. A group called the **Tamil Tigers** fought the Sri Lankan government for 23 years in an effort to separate and create an independent **Tamil** nation.

5. Canadian officials believe that the Tamils are arriving as a result of an illegal **human smuggling** network.